

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 03131 260324Z
ACTION EA-09

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SN
SUBJECT: PAP WINS BUKIT MERAH BY-ELECTION

REF: SINGAPORE 2847

1. SUMMARY: PAP CANDIDATE LIM CHEE ONN ROMPED TO VICTORY OVER BARISAN SOSIALIS (BS) CHAIRMAN DR. LEE SIEW CHOH IN A PREDICTABLE BUKIT MERAH BY-ELECTION ON JULY 23,. LIM RECEIVED 11,625 VOTES FOR A MAJORITY OF 7,152. LEE STRONGLY HINTED TO THE PRESS THAT HE WOULD NOT ENTER FUTURE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. NINETY-SEVEN PERCENT OF BUKIT MERAH'S VOTERS TURNED OUT ON JULY 23 FOR THE BY-ELECTION, WITH THE PAP CANDIDATE LIM CHEE ONN RECEIVING 11,625 VOTES TO 4,473 FOR HIS OPPONENT DR. LEE SIEW CHOH, VETERAN CHAIRMAN OF BARISAN SOSIALIS.

3. LIM SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME IN DOOR-TO-DOOR CANAVASSING OF THE 56 HDB BLOCKS OF FLATMSIN THIS WORKING-CLASS DISTRICT. THE LOCAL PRESS CARRIED A WARM ENDORSEMENT FROM PM LEE, AND LIM RECEIVED STRONG SUPPORT IN HIS RALLIES FROM SEVERAL MPS AND MINISTERS.

4. LEE WAS SUPPORTED IN HIS EFFORT BY THE JOINT OPPOSITION
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COUNCIL (BS, JUSTICE PARTY, PKMS, AND THE UNITED FRONT) AND THE WORKERS' PARTY. THE CAMPAIGN CENTERED ON THE NEED FOR AN OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT AND ON THE CLIMATE OF FEAR ALLEGEDLY CREATED BY THE PAP. AN UNORTHODOX ECONOMIC PROGRAM CALLED FOR MORE GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMBINED WITH LESS TAXES AND LESS INVOLVEMENT BY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

5. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS DR. LEE STRONGLY HINTED THAT HE WAS "CALLING IT A DAY." UPON EMERGING FROM THE COUNTING STATION, HE TOLD NEWSMEN: "YOU KNOW, I AM NOT YOUNG ANYMORE. I WISH I WAS 20 YEARS YOUNGER. I CAN'T GO ON JOGGING LIKE THIS, BUT IF I HAD SOME MONKEY GLANDS INJECTED IN ME THEM MAYBE..." LEE IS 60 YEARS OLD AND HAS SUFFERED FOUR DEFEATS DURING 16 YEARS OF OPPOSITION TO THE PAP.

6. COMMENT: THE OPPOSITION INCREASED ITS VOTE IN BUKIT MERAH FROM 23.2 PERCENT IN THE 1976 GENERAL ELECTIONS TO 27.1 PERCENT THIS BY-ELECTION. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL, AS THE OPPOSITION TRADITIONALLY PERFORMS BETTER IN A BY-ELECTION. ALSO, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME OUT FOR LIM, AND DR. LEE IS A VETERAN. FOR LEE, HOWEVER, IT WAS COMEDOWN FROM HIS PERFORMANCE IN THE 1976 GENERAL ELECTIONS, WHEN HE CAPTURED 33.6 PERCENT OF THE VOTES CASE IN ROCHORE IN A BATTLE AGAINST THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, DR. TOH CHIN CHYE.
HOLDRIDGE

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Sent Date: 25-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
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